

Bristol, January 29th - Feb. 7th - 1846

My dear Mr. May.

Your letter of December 29th reached me on the 28th Jan. I presume the box was not sent by the first Jan. steamer for we received the "Liberator" of Jan. 2nd on the 17th following: this seemed very rapid transmission. Many thanks for your letter and for the accompanying publications which were forwarded to me by Chapman. You do not mistake my interest in your correspondence in writing to me so freely as you do, & as you are inclined to suppose, in a gossiping style: it is impossible for me otherwise clearly to comprehend the various bearings of things & persons on which you kindly desire to give me information. I am quite satisfied now I find that the heaviest portion of the letter postage does not fall on you. Your mode however of sending by Chapman is a good, if not a quick one: for books it is decidedly best, as many shillings have sometimes been charged us upon a pamphlet inadvertently sent by Post from Am. Next to Printing, our reduced Postage is the greatest blessing

to this country as regards the spread of knowledge & the cultivation of sound ^{opinion} ~~reason~~, and the interests of commerce. And the revenue is fast getting up to what it used to be. Rowland Hill has conferred on Britain far more valuable services than the D. of Wellington has. Sometime I may tell you about the Testimonial presented to him.

With you, I have never been able to believe there can be a war between our countries. Whatev^r may be the notion of who is right or who wrong among those who have studied the Oregon question (I know nothing about it) I believe there is the very reverse of a war feeling thro' out this country. Our soldiers & sailors might not be displeased to exercise their vocation in any part of the world in the hope of getting money or honour in their trade, but even with them I believe there is no war-feeling against America. ^{I don't believe your Gov^t intend of w^{ar} with} now public & official Councils a solemn feeling, & dignified conduct seem to prevail on the subject, as far as I can judge, very different from the state of the American Legislative Assemblies. Mr. J. L. Adams would speak so freely of me! Did he make it from hostility to the slaveholders, or to some other party purposes? Is it not unworthy of ^{serious} him, or has senility come over him?

I notice the remarks in your letter respecting, as the best method of con-
densing what I say, & not losing my writing time in a rambling and half-
told tale. — I am glad you liked Chambers's Volume. My daugh-
ter will not let me "execute your order" as to the other volumes, but
hopes you will allow her to introduce herself to the acquaintance of your
little ones, by begging them requesting their acceptance from her of those
volumes. She would have written her good wishes in one of the books
but it will be more convenient to have them sent direct from London.
Mr. Chapman has ordered to forward them by the next parcel he
sends out, addressed to you, to the care of Messrs Crosby & Nichol. The
value of the present ~~is~~ need not disturb you; any separate tract may
be procured for one penny. Thank you for your consideration
about my health, but I can assure you it is quite equal, as much as
my inclination is, (& that is strong enough,) to do any thing that can be
useful or acceptable to you. I am thankful to say that I am
now as well as I can expect to be after my severe illness in the
summer, ~~and eager to~~ ^{after} an anxious, though interesting life of
labour for 30 years, & now being 60 years old. I can walk several
miles, attend moderately to ^{my} ophthalmic practice, and tho' with a
weakened constitution, ^{am} free from any specific disease. My illness
was attended by a fearful event that I cannot yet contemplate without
deep emotion. After some days of dysenteric disease, I was a little easier
& my daughter, worn out with anxiety & night nursing, ^{after sleeping} rose suddenly in
the night to give me a rhubarb draught, but by mistake poured out
a bottle of Laudanum ~~by mistake~~ which I drank. My nephew who slept
in the house to watch over me was promptly with me. I was immediately
aware of the accident & was perfectly calm. I had previously con-
templated dissolution with tranquillity & resignation: its ~~near~~ prospect
did not then alarm ^{me}, but the thought of the sorrow such a death would throw
over the remainder of my daughter's life induced me while conscious.
neph remained, to do ~~everything necessary~~ ^{all that} I possibly ~~for~~ could, to pre-
serve my life, & I was told after, that while insensible to external objects
I repeatedly, on being roused, expressed my desire in my daughter's account
to do every thing required of me. After many hours of comparative ease

to myself, but of distressing anxiety to the numerous beloved relatives by
whom I was surrounded, I was mercifully restored to safety. I understand
that during some of my worst symptoms my daughter was too exhausted by
previous fatigue to be aware of my condition. When you write, ^{as it} happen
be pleased not to refer to this subject, it would be painful to my daughter.
I cannot recur to the subject without the deepest emotion, &
feel so thankful & not ^{having been} ~~being~~ called on any under circumstances that would
have left so heavy a cloud over the future days of the dearest object of my
earthly regards, as to be quite ready & willing, (I can almost say
cheerfully) to resign my life into the hands of my Heavenly Father
whenever he sees fit to require it. My sister in law Mrs. Mitchell
a widow, to whom my daughter is much attached, came to help & care
nurse me, & has not left as since. Sportively called by one of my
medical friends my "faithful guardians," they watch me with
a degree of care & solicitude quite unnecessary (at least so
I think) now. But how much a dangerous & severe illness leads
one to appreciate the value of sympathy & affection, and the un-
merited alleviations ^{of in time of sickness} ~~in my case at least~~ by which those in easy
circumstances are surrounded!

You will perceive that I am addressing you in a very un-
restrained way. Perhaps I should hardly have entered into all
those minutiae had not some of them appeared in print: my
case having been, as a one of medical interest, detailed at a quarterly
meeting of an Assocⁿ of which I am President, ^{the proceedings of the meeting} & having been subse-
quently reported in the "Provincial Med^l & Surgical Journal".

At present I need not trouble you about books, as Chapman has
tolerably quickly procured those I ordered. Among them was "Walker's
Narrative"; I thank you however for furnishing me with a second copy
for lending. The plate of the cruel beating of a woman I have
not thought it necessary to remove, though I should not especially
point it out to any one. It explains to me a mode of punishment

I could not quite comprehend before. The objectionable passage in Douglas might be otherwise expressed without concealing the enormity of the proceeding. Its existence, in its present form has greatly limited the sale of the book in Bristol. I have fully discussed the point with Mr. Rich^d Webb of Dublin who has published the last edition, & he will adopt in another edition, should one be called for, (I presume with F. D.'s approbation) an alteration that I have suggested.

And now as to F. Douglas. I felt much interested in him by reading the "Liberator" long before you mentioned him. As soon as I heard of his being in Ireland I wrote to Mr. Rich^d D. Webb about him from whom I soon received 50 copies of the "Narrative" which Mr. W. had just printed. These I quickly sold to friends, & had 50 more. The second lot was not long on hand, and I have now by me a third parcel ^{that} contains 100 copies which are rapidly diminishing. The price is 2/6 each, & I remit the money to Mr. Webb (who kindly undertakes Douglas's financial affairs in this matter) as soon as I have disposed of 50 books. The last set of the "Narrative" contains a portrait which Mr. Webb says is an accurate likeness. I much prefer it, (as a counterpane for I have not seen F. D.) to that in the Boston edition which has a scornful, contemptuous look. I have written to F. Douglas to invite him to take up his abode at my house when he visits Bristol & he has written an answer of acceptance which has much interested my friends & myself. Mr. Edward Thomas, a most actively benevolent Quaker, has expressed his great readiness to receive Douglas as his guest & should my uncertain health deprive me of the satisfaction of showing him hospitality. I am now endeavouring to excite an interest in Douglas, in this populous & wealthy city, & with that view put into our local papers a short notice of him. It was being cribbed into the "Inquirer", & I believe other papers. A Lady ^{in whose house} Douglas was staying while at Cork, writes to me about him in terms of great respect and even admiration. It seems he has much tact & observation.

2nd and is likely to take a judicious course in his public harangues -
I suppose you have seen ere now, the account of a public breakfast given
to him at Belfast presided over by a Member of Parliament? It is only
distinguished persons who are thus complimented here. What would
his Master & other Southerners say were they to hear of this proceeding?
I have ordered of Chapman an "Oration on the Slave Laws" which
heer is scarce. If you could help Mr. Croby in procuring this for me,
I should be obliged. I am reading "Slavery as it is" - what an exposure
of sin & suffering!

I am acquainted with the progress of the Cambrian who ^{sailed} came with
J. Douglass & who gave me full particulars of the disturbance. Mr. Lither
Douglass, & said he behaved quite well on that occasion; Capt. Jenkins
however, did not shine in the affray quite as much appears in the
printed statement - Do not however, repeat this.

H. C. Wright's "Introduction of the Union" is a most valuable production.
I am circulating many copies. I am not an unlimited admirer of
Mr. Wright's: I have seen some of his notions which I have thought
foolish if not mischievous. His unmeasured abuse of a Sabbath
disgusts me. Though misapprehended, abused, & hypocritically per-
verted by numbers, tens of thousands in this country are indebted to
the ^{important appointment} ~~valuable arrangement~~ of a day of rest & inducement to religious
exercise, for which they would in no other way have acquired, ^{for} what
has been invaluable to their peace & comfort thro' the whole of
their lives. - Mr. Wright ^{justly} ~~unjustly~~ & as I think, ~~unchristianly~~ ^{uncharitably}

speaks of some distinguished Scottish Ministers as "tipplers" because
they do not join the Temperance Socy? I am always rejoiced to see
Ministers unite in these institutions, but should be cautious in con-
demning them if they do not. I wish the Free Church of Scotland
would not keep the Slaveholders subscribers, but I should ~~shrink~~
shrink from throwing a stone at men ~~peaceful~~ ^{as they have} who have
made such sacrifices for conscience sake, ~~for an act~~ ^{for an act}, the
superiority of which their own consciences must decide. Want of al-
lowance for the conscience has convictions of others, is too often the
error of those who engage even in good works, it is often H. C. Wright's!

Your last letter to Mr. Corns tray contained too good an answer to a Lover
of Charity & Justice to be lost. I begged permission of Mr. A. to make some
extracts for the "Inquirer", and my daughter undertook the task of copying out
what you will see I have in last Saturday's (Jan 7th) "Inquirer". I fear
the writer of that letter is Mr. Hunt's former brother of South of Tarrant where
you remember; this brother has been in ^{N. Orleans} ~~Camden~~ & is settled at Louisville.
I sent a little notice of Douglass's "falsehood!" to that No. of the Inquirer.

There is nothing in the letter from Mr. Kitts to forbid its
being printed if you wish it; and ~~as to~~ ^{as to} any other information or
opinions I send you, I have no objection ^{to} your making any use of them
you think desirable. I am sure you will at once see what may be
called private in my communications. — I ~~am~~ ^{am} seldom lent
my name to what I write for the "Inquirer" or any other paper, but
I am indifferent to any reference made to me ^{in papers} either here or in
America. Our ladies have a great horror of seeing their names
in newspapers excepting in lists with others.

I'm expressing myself as I did respecting Miss Mortimer, & by no
means would throw suspicion on her integrity: I cannot doubt that
she is a firm believer in Mesmerism, & in speaking of her "fall" I merely
meant in the estimation of the many who ^{once} appreciated her judg-
ment & good sense more than they ever can again. The inability
(apparently at least) of those who believe in Mesmerism fairly to ex-
amine evidence, is most remarkable here. Briefly to state Miss
M's mental condition on this point. Her servant J. is very unhappy
about a shipwreck, her cousin being on board the unfortunate ship. —
On Monday, J's female cousin goes from Tyneworth to Shields to
learn particular news, & hears them all at the owner's house, the sailor had
^{they were anxious about} being safe — She returns to Tyneworth on that Monday: J. calls
on her that same evening. On the next (Tuesday) evening J. is
mesmerised, & tells all about the shipwreck; her saved cousin &
the life of one of the crew previously to the wreck; and Miss Mortimer
maintains that J. had heard no one circumstance of the wreck
until after this Tuesday evening; mesmerising, — not on Monday
evening while with her anxious cousin who had been to Shields &

heard the good news, not during any part of the Tuesday forenoon. I think
it probable you may have faith in Mesm^m - for I hardly ever conversed with
an Amerⁿ on the subject who did not believe, - but is not this statement
too incredible for your credence? A surgeon of Manchester ^{produces}
all the usual mesmeric ~~devised~~ phenomena without any willing, or
making passes &c. merely by fixing the eyes, & concentrating the
patients' attention to themselves & the expected effects: after a time
they go off into a nervous state merely upon his telling them to do so.
Remember, it is only some few persons who do exhibit these
peculiar states of constitution. I believe that far more wonder full effects
might be excited in some people by a powerful action on the iris &c.
Have you seen the case of a M. de Ernest Valdemar, seen Westcliffe
by Mesm^m for 7 months after apparent dissolution, said to be extracted
from the "American Magazine", by Edgar A. Poe? M. Valdemar
is said to be the author of the "Encyclopaedia Americana" - Is this an
American or an English heart?

Chambers's tract on "Slavery in America" is an ^{admirable one} enormous evil.
for disseminating amongst people ~~at home~~ a knowledge of the ~~subject~~
To you it may appear tame: our first readers on the subject are ap-
palled at its statements. My correspondent & friend Mr. Webb of Dublin
is disappointed at the coldness of this warm work on the Abolitionists
in America: but I trust you will take a comprehensive view of the
matter: if the English are fully enlightened on Amⁿ Slavery, are most
anxious for its removal, applaud, & sympathize with "the Abolition-
ists" in your country: - if in addition to a high appreciation
of the cause of Abolition, and good wishes, & wise efforts for its success,
the means of providing pecuniary help find their way into the
hands of the original Massachusetts Society, you must not be
disturbed at ~~our~~ not entering into, - not ^{indeed} knowing much about, the
apparent mischiefs of "old & new organizations", Liberty, & Third Party:
any attempt here to enter upon, & explain these distinctions (from
the discussions among the Amⁿ Abolⁿ which must necessarily be revealed)
would produce unmix'd evil in the advocacy of your cause. -

To refer again to the St. Kitts negro, if you publish the letter, I think you had better omit the name of Messrs Baillie, & say it is addressed to one of the first West Indian mercantile houses in Bristol: I have no objection to my authority being put, if desirable, as a guarantee of the truth. — I send Mrs. Day's letter in volume of Chambers's Miscellany; an Atlas, & some books for his children, and Mr. Ames sent me any others.

I had hoped the acct. of the breakfast given to F. D. in Belfast, would have been in the "Bristol Mercury" of this day (Jan²³) but I suppose it was too long for this week's number. I will send you however our paper of this week, as it contains an abstract of the very interesting discussions that have taken place in the H. of Commons. The Queen's conduct has been admirable during our late Cabinet differences: to ^{ascertain} accomplish the desire of the mass of the nation, has obviously been her single aim. Sir Robert Peel's political opponents always support him when he advocates liberal measures, & as he is now happily doing in a very wholesale way. Our high tones, & conservative wealthy portion of the Aristocracy, have no great love for the Queen whom they think not sufficiently protective of their order. I understand to day's Mercury has the whole of Sir R. Peel's free trade speech.

Thanks for the different books. The "Portent" is in a useful form. "Hummer's Oration" I was am very glad to see. Goodells, & Wendell Phillips tract I had ^{before} the "Unit. Am. Register" will interest me. Messrs James & Acornbury have rec^d their copies.

I was glad to hear your report of our offering to the Boston Fair (as we have now begun to call it, while you have exchanged ^{this name} the former term "Bazaar".) It is satisfactory to us, to me especially, to be told that our sympathy and aid, are not only encouraging, but useful. I have sometimes a misgiving that in reading, writing, talking, & thinking a good deal about American Slavery, in which subject I confess myself ^{deeply} interested, I am ^{too} ~~too~~ ^{which might be more usefully employed in more objects} absorbing time in contemplating an evil too vast, & too distant for me to have the slightest power of remedying. Wishing to act up to the rule of not letting a day pass without doing some good to some body, I sometimes ask myself how I can expect to do any good in reference to the overwhelming evil of American Slavery? I shall look with interest for still further notices of the Fair.

3rd than your letter or the "Liberator" have yet afforded, though we are quite satisfied with your comment and criticisms of the British portion of the tract.

In referring to the difficulty I felt in defending your section of the Abolitionist's party, it was not a case of indifference or apathy. I was solidly anxious to prevent the discouragement that many excellent persons are inclined to feel in the cause, when they obtain a knowledge of the disputes, dissensions & almost animosities prevailing among the various Abol. societies: they argue that a newly good cause could not give rise to such uncandid, unforbearing sentiments as the dissensions & betray. For my own part, though I see room for much improvement, there is quite enough of what is sensible & good in "disorganized" Abol. to ensue the feeble sympathy & aid that living circles of influence, I am not inactive in the cause.

You are our liberality in paying the freight of our box to the Fair. Do not think of it. I think however we may arrange these things more economically in future: the freight of our last box to Liverpool & thence to Boston amounted to £4.17.6.

No Liberator came to Mr. James by the last packet: our latest No is that for Jan. 2nd. no very distant ^{date} however, I must allow.

My daughter keeps her kind remembrance to you, & joins me in best wishes for the health of Mr. May, yourself, & little family, and I remain, my dear Sir

Sincerely yours

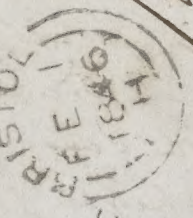
J. B. Estlin.

As my letter is over the 1/2 ounce, I will inclose a copy of the notice of Dr. Douglass which I have referred to, & send also a mem. from Miss Carpenter.

The paper I have had into the "Anti-Slavery Reporter" appears me of much interest in its perusal: I wish we had something of the same ^{kind}. The "Inquirer" contains all that is worth knowing of the proceedings of English Abol. I am very glad you see it. It ought to be better supported by our body. I have endeavored to stir them occasionally to a truer sense of the "Inquirer's" merits. If you

ever full in with Mr. Kimmons, please to remember me to
him & my daughter & Mrs. Michell. I was glad to see his
name to your Protest




 Recd. (Gay) Feb. 20. 1846
 Recd. by
 6th March 1846
 Paid
 New & S. May,
 Leicester,
 Massachusetts,
 U.S.



Ms. B. 1. 6 v. 2, p. 11

Howard, Boston

article in Liberator - Mr. Fry's Note, &c.
 H. C. Wright. Present to children from daughter.
 F. Douglass invited. Free Church &
 St. Kitt's Letter. Howard Churchman's name.
 His letter sent to W. Phillips
 the piece in "Inquirer"
 Sent his article to (Liberator & Standard)
 Messrs. May & Co. of New York
 "Mistaken names"
 Paying the people.
 His daughter
 also himself
 4th p. of letter